

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
Los Angeles District, Corps of Engineers  
P.O. Box 532711  
Los Angeles, California 90053-2325

CESPL-CO-R

OFFICE MEMORANDUM  
NUMBER 415-1-6

30 October 2000

Construction  
POLICY STATEMENT ON REMOVAL OF COLORADO RIVER ARMORED  
BANKLINES

1. Purpose. To establish policy within the Los Angeles District (SPL) regarding the removal of Bureau of Reclamation armored banklines on the Colorado River from Davis Dam to Morelos Dam.
2. Applicability. This applies to SPL elements responsible for Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the River and Harbor Act of 1899 permit programs along the Colorado River from Davis Dam to Morelos Dam in Arizona and California.
3. Reference. 33 USC 1344 (Clean Water Act) and 33 USC 403 (River and Harbor Act of 1899) and 33 CFR 320 et.seq.
4. Statement of Policy. The Bureau of Reclamation, as the agency charged with river operations and maintenance, has placed riprap in several locations along the banklines of the river to reduce the potential for scour and to prevent flood damage. Unauthorized removal of Bureau of Reclamation armored (rock riprapped) banklines below the ordinary high water mark (OHWM) of the Colorado River often results in the accelerated erosion of the bankline. Proliferation of such activities causes unnecessary cumulative adverse effects on the aquatic ecosystem and water quality due to the increased amount of sediment and turbidity in the river from eroding banklines. In addition, removal of the riprap may cause stormwater from above the OHWM to erode the exposed bankline and discharge sediment into the river thereby causing the deposition of sandbars which become navigational hazards. These sandbars require removal by the Bureau of Reclamation which increases impacts to the river, often to critical habitat of endangered fish, and causes additional expenditures of Federal tax dollars. Removal of the armor may also cause undermining of the overall structure and compromise its integrity upstream and downstream of the affected area as well as change river hydrology. This change may affect banklines across the river from the affected area causing increased erosion and particularly compromising any natural banklines.

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5. Based on these cumulative impacts to the aquatic ecosystem, in most circumstances, applications to remove riprap placed by the Bureau of Reclamation below the ordinary high water mark will not be authorized by the Corps.

6. The Corps recognizes there may be extenuating circumstances which require removal of the armor. In such cases, permit authorization shall be considered upon receipt of a complete application. While the amount of material to be removed or discharged may comply with a Nationwide permit, the District Engineer may exert discretionary authority to process the application as an individual permit based on direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts. The applicant must provide alternative stabilization of any exposed banklines. Prior to the Corps authorizing any exception to this policy statement, the applicant must obtain written approval from the Bureau of Reclamation, Yuma Area Office, on removal of the armor and alternative method of stabilization.

7. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 USC 1344) prohibits any discharge of dredged and/or fill material into a water of the U.S., including wetlands, without authorization in the form of a Department of the Army (DA) permit. Section 10 of the River and Harbor Act of 1899 (33 USC 403) prohibits any work or structures in or affecting a navigable water of the U.S., such as the Colorado River, without authorization in the form of a DA permit.

NOTE: THIS STATEMENT OF POLICY AND THE GUIDANCE IT CONTAINS DOES NOT REPRESENT NOR CONSTITUTE A PERMIT DECISION BY THE LOS ANGELES DISTRICT. EACH PERMIT APPLICATION SHALL BE JUDGED INDIVIDUALLY ON ITS OWN MERITS, WITH APPROPRIATE CONSIDERATION GIVEN TO THIS GUIDANCE. THIS POLICY DOES NOT OBVIATE THE NEED TO OBTAIN OTHER FEDERAL, STATE, OR LOCAL PERMITS OR COMPLY WITH APPLICABLE SAFETY REGULATIONS.

FOR THE COMMANDER:

CHARLES V. LANDRY  
LTC, EN  
Deputy Commander

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